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Country and intercountry programming

COUNTRY PROGRAMME OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Note by the Administrator

Programme period	IPF for the period 1977-1981:
1981-1986	$7.5 million
	Illustrative IPF for the period 1982-1986:
	$11 million

I. Nature of the programming exercise

1. The 1981-1986 UNDP programme for the People's Republic of the Congo coincides with the stage of launching and the period of implementation of the national five-year plan. After the first programme, which covered the years 1972-1976, no

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* This document will be derestricted once the country programme has been approved. See document DP/526, which will be issued in June 1981.

document was prepared for the period between 1977 and that covered by the present programme.

2. Substantial preparatory work was done in 1979 and 1980 by the specialized agencies of the United Nations. This work included a series of missions aimed at identifying within each agency's sphere of competence and in each sector the country's technical assistance requirements in the light of the Government's objectives and strategies. In May 1980, the Resident Representative prepared a note which presented an overview of ongoing work. The note also underscored the importance of co-ordination with inputs from other programmes of the United Nations system and of harmonizing contributions from other bilateral and multilateral donors. The assessment of requirements made it possible to identify a number of ideas for projects and the Government was able to obtain a sufficiently complete picture of the potential contribution of international technical co-operation, even in sectors in which the identification missions did not produce any ideas for projects that were incorporated in the UNDP programme.

3. The country programme was finalized at a review meeting chaired by the Minister of Planning, in which the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa took part. The cost of the projects identified proved to be greater than the resources available under the illustrative indicative planning figure (IPF). The Government expressed regret over the inadequacy of resources available to UNDP in relation to the level of its technical assistance requirements and its capacity for identifying and implementing projects. The Government therefore decided to provide, under cost-sharing arrangements, additional funds amounting to $3,500,045 to cover the cost of the projects selected.

4. UNDP programming has been envisaged as a flexible ongoing activity, including annual reviews so that the programme can continually be adapted to economic realities.

II. Relationship of the programme to national development objectives

5. As the Government indicated in the country paper, the general guidelines of the development strategy of the People's Republic of the Congo were reaffirmed by the Third Congress of the Congolese Labour Party, which was held at Brazzaville from 26 to 31 March 1979. The structural analysis of the economy made by the Congress shows that the Congo is still confronted by a neo-colonial development pattern. On the basis of that analysis, the present stage of the Congolese revolution was defined as that of the national, democratic and people's revolution. Its objectives are (a) to control the decision-making centres within the country and (b) to create and develop domestic markets so as to restructure the economy in the light of internal needs and to increase production to meet the basic needs of the broad mass of population. To that end, the Congo has adopted a self-reliant and self-propelled development strategy founded on the agriculture-industry interrelationship, in which agriculture constitutes the basis for development and industry the determining factor. Emphasis has also been placed on interregional and intraregional interdependence and complementarity.

6. The Third Congress laid down guidelines for the drawing up of a five-year plan covering 1982-1986. Preparatory work is under way on this plan, which will dovetail with a longer-range projection focusing on the year 2000. The guidelines identify as priority tasks recovery, particularly in the sector of activities sponsored by the State and public finances, and economic revival. In order to complement the State's investment effort, a policy of incentives for the private sector, both national and expatriate, is envisaged. The quest for economic independence is not synomous with autarky. The self-reliant strategy that has been adopted is consistent in particular with the principles of the Plan of Action adopted at the economic summit meeting of Heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity at Lagos.

7. At the time when the country programme was being finalized, the preparation of the five-year plan had not been completed. Nevertheless, the consistency of the projects with the Government's broad approach was assured. The programming exercise itself was envisaged as an input for the planning exercise through the participation of the various agencies of the United Nations system, which were able to express their views with regard to technical assistance requirements in their fields of competence.

8. Moreover, one of the main objectives of most of the projects is precisely to strengthen the planning, management and monitoring capacity of the Congolese Government both through institutional backstopping and through pilot activities that should contribute to the implementation of appropriate strategies at the national level.

III. Content and phasing of the programme

9. Table 1 below shows the sectoral breakdown of programmed resources, while table 2 shows the phasing of the programme.

Table 1

Sectoral breakdown of programmed resources

(in thousands of dollars)

	Ongoing projects		New projects		Total	
Sector	Value	Per cent	Value	Per cent	Value	Per cent
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	2 500	17.6	4 900	34.5	7 400	52.1
Education	80	1.0	1 120	7.8	1 200	8.8
Planning and administration	1 500	10.5	3 530	24.8	5 030	35.3
Transport and communications	-	-	550	3.8	550	3.8
Total	4 080	29.1	10 100	70.9	14 180	100.0
Reserve					1 022	
Total					15 202	

Table 2

Phasing of the programme

A. Amount programmed

Year	(thousands of dollars)
1981	2 633
1982	3 295
1983	3 325
1984	2 640
1985	1 587
1986	700
United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration	865
Reserve	1 022
Total	16 067

B. Resources taken into account for programming

Resources available	
(a) IPF resources	
(i) Second cycle	1 565 a/
(ii) Third cycle	8 800 b/
	10 365
(b) Other resources	4 002 c/
Adequate programming	1 700
Total resources taken into account for programming	16 067

a/ This figure represents the difference between the 1977-1981 IPF after adjustment for over-expenditure from the first cycle ($7,249,000) and expenditure for the years 1977-1980 ($5,684,000).

b/ This figure is equivalent to the illustrative IPF ($11 million) less 20 per cent.

c/ This figure includes the cost-sharing contribution of the Government ($3,545,000) less agency expenses ($408,000) and contributions from the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration ($865,000).

10. It should be noted that the programme is tailored to the phase of formulation and initiation of the five-year plan. Once the plan and its machinery have been established, the UNDP programme may be reoriented to some extent as sectoral objectives emerge. For that reason, a number of projects have not been worked out in detail beyond the first period. The importance of the present initial phase is also revealed by the concentration of resources on the early years. The proportion of new projects is relatively high: three projects (accounting for 27 per cent of resources) are follow-up activities to ongoing projects, four projects (20 per cent of resources) have passed through a preparatory phase and nine projects (53 per cent of resources) have not yet involved any field activities.

11. Nearly half (48 per cent) of the programme is concerned with projects in the field of rural economy. The Government's strategy is to make agriculture, in the broad sense (land, water, forests), the primary sector. Congolese agriculture is seriously under-developed and increased efforts to impart dynamism are clearly needed in order both to increase production and to improve living conditions and curb the exodus from rural areas. The main projects relate to:

(a) Integrated rural development of the Pool and Plateaux areas based on the promotion of co-operative groups; this project also has the long-term goal of paving the way for the extension to all regions of the activities which are devised;

(b) Assistance to new structures, particularly offices for food crops, coffee and cocoa to promote, supervise and market peasant production;

(c) Agricultural statistics.

A project is envisaged to expand and improve rural fish-farming.

12. The forest resources of the Congo have the potential to make a major contribution to the country's economic development. So far, however, the real impact of forestry development, in terms both of tax revenue and of general economic development, has been less than anticipated. UNDP assistance relates to institutional strengthening of forestry administration, including on-the-job training for local personnel, and promotion of the forestry sector's contribution to rural development and to the well-being of the population.

13. The second major segment (34 per cent) of the programme consists of a number of projects aimed at strengthening the planning and administrative capacity of the public sector: institutional support for the Ministry of Planning, establishment of a project design department, programming of the development of human settlements, reform of public administration, and training of middle-level personnel. In order to aid in the recovery of the State economic sector, the project of assistance to the National Management Centre (CENAGES), a structure established to help State enterprises with management, organization and production, will be continued. The objective of the project is to make the Centre fully operational through accelerated training of national staff.

14. The importance of the educational sector is greater than the proportion of resources allocated to it (8 per cent). UNDP assistance is designed to serve as a

catalyst for a variety of national and external inputs to the implementation of the educational reform which was prepared and planned by the Government with UNDP assistance during the previous cycle.

15. The remaining resources are divided between two sectors - transport and communications (4 per cent) and natural resources (6 per cent) - which are of great importance for the country's development.

IV. Special development problems and needs of the country

16. As was noted by the Third Congress of the Congolese Labour Party, the Congolese economy, despite persistent efforts, has not been able to overcome the structural impediments inherited from the colonial era. The situation is characterized in particular by (a) an externally-oriented and imbalanced economy; (b) an excessively developed tertiary sector, owing primarily to the Congo's long-standing role as a transit country; (c) a declining industrial sector, which is based on import substitution; (d) a backward agricultural sector that is constantly declining; and (e) a poorly developed domestic market.

17. Circumstances, both external and domestic, hampered the implementation of the programmes of action which had been devised. In addition, short-comings emerged in the capacity to plan and monitor the programmes. The growth of gross domestic product reached 13 per cent a year in 1973-1974 as a result of an increase in oil production and prices, but the subsequent drop in oil production led to a crisis situation characterized by strained public finances resulting in high external and domestic indebtedness, a deterioration in the financial situation of national enterprises, a decline in the purchasing power of the population, migration from rural areas and worsening unemployment.

18. Beginning in 1979, economic activity gradually picked up and the financial situation showed some improvement owing, inter alia, to the upward turn in oil earnings. Nevertheless, the over-all situation continues to be affected by the difficulties outlined above.

V. Recommendation of the Administrator

19. In the light of the foregoing, the Administrator recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Approve the UNDP programme for the Congo for the duration of the programme period and within the limit of the indicative planning figure for 1982-1986, taking into account the over-expenditure or under-expenditure of its 1977-1981 indicative planning figure; and

(b) Authorize the Administrator to proceed with appraisal and approval of action on requests for assistance falling within the outlines of the country programme while ensuring, in accordance with the decision of the Governing Council at its eighteenth session (E/5543/Rev.1, para. 31) that expenditures are kept in reasonable conformity with the relevant indicative planning figures and are contained within the financial resources currently available at any given time.